

PART IV

**ARIZONA WILLOW
CONSERVATION STRATEGIES BY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

E. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources



State of Utah
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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December 28, 1994

Mr. Sam Spiller, Field Supervisor
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arizona Ecological Services Field Office
2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103
Phoenix, Arizona 85021-4951

Dear Mr. Spiller:

Attached is our "Conservation Strategies for the Arizona Willow Conservation Agreement." This is the result of a meeting in St. George, Utah, on December 8, 1994.

I would like to point out section 6. The Utah Natural Heritage Program became part of the Division last July. We have put a statement in this agreement for the sharing of information collected by any of the Forests involved. The Natural Heritage Program is the central repository in Utah for sensitive, candidate and listed species as per the interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entitled *Utah Conservation Effort for Sensitive, Candidate and Listed Species* and the Division of Wildlife Resources is the central repository in Utah for wildlife information.

We support this Conservation Agreement and feel it should have favorable results for the Arizona willow in Utah.

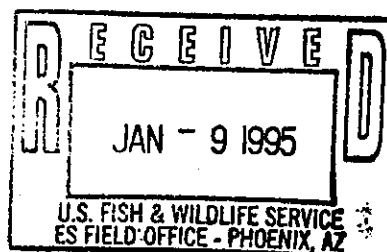
Sincerely,

Robert G. Valentine
Director

Attachments

cc: Bob Williams, USFWS, SLC
Dixie National Forest
Fishlake National Forest

WCQ\WP\ARIZWILL



Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Conservation Strategies
for the
Arizona Willow Conservation Agreement

Introduction

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is responsible for population management of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species in Utah. In addition, the Division's mission is "to assure the future of protected wildlife for its intrinsic, scientific, educational and recreational values through protection, propagation, management, conservation and distribution throughout the state." Consequently, the Division has a strong commitment toward the restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitats, including riparian habitats which contain Arizona willow populations.

The stream and riparian habitats that support Arizona willow on the Dixie National Forest (DNF) and Fishlake National Forest (FLNF) also provide important habitat for numerous terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species. These habitats are of key importance for endangered, threatened and sensitive species such as Colorado cutthroat trout, Bonneville cutthroat trout, boreal toad, northern leopard frog, long-eared myotis, long-legged myotis and willow flycatcher. Riparian areas are utilized by 75 percent of Utah's neotropical migratory birds (see attachment), and important to game species such as elk, mule deer, moose, pronghorn antelope, Merriam's wild turkey, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, as well as, furbearers such as beaver and muskrat.

Herbivory of Arizona willow plants by wildlife, particularly elk, has been identified in Arizona as a potential threat to the health of the plant. How wildlife affects populations of Arizona willow in Utah is unknown at this time. Intensive radio telemetry studies, however, on elk and moose in the Sevenmile drainage of FLNF have shown little to no use of willow in identified Arizona willow populations. Heavy use by livestock in this drainage is believed to greatly reduce use of the area by big game. Shiras moose in southern Utah have been found to be mainly an upland species using mountain mahogany, serviceberry and oak much more extensively than willow bottoms. Antelope use of willows on the Paunsaugunt is felt to be very low to non-existent, since antelope are rarely found in the upper drainage and tend to use forbs during the summer when they are in Arizona willow habitat.

Elk in Arizona willow habitat in Utah (Southern Region) are managed under the following elk management plans approved in 1994: the Fishlake Elk Plan, the Paunsaugunt Elk Plan and the Panguitch Lake Elk Plan. Moose are recent transplants to the FLNF in 1988-92. Moose numbers have remained low with population estimates at under

100 animals for the entire forest. Management plans for mule deer will be written and approved by 1997. As mentioned above, antelope numbers in Arizona willow habitat are believed to be extremely low.

Conservation Strategies

1. The UDWR is committed to actively participate in the development and implementation of monitoring and research activities to determine the effects of wildlife and livestock herbivory on Arizona willow populations.
2. The UDWR is committed to aggressively managing elk, mule deer, moose and pronghorn antelope within Management Plan guidelines and consistent with monitoring and research information on Arizona willow populations.
3. The UDWR is committed to updating and revising the elk and mule deer management plans' population management objectives in response to willow management concerns, on at least a five-year basis for units which contain Arizona willow populations.
4. The UDWR supports USFS efforts to fence selected areas as needed to protect and research use of Arizona willow populations.
5. The UDWR is committed to assisting in research and monitoring of beaver activities to determine impacts and/or benefits resulting from their use of Arizona willow habitat.
6. The Forest Service will transmit to the Utah Natural Heritage Program (UTNHP) any and all new data collected on the Arizona willow by Forest Service field personnel pursuant to its responsibilities under the interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entitled *Utah Conservation Effort for Sensitive, Candidate and Listed Species*.

The UTNHP serves as the central repository for this information in Utah pursuant to its responsibilities under the same MOU. The UTNHP assures the Forest Service that sensitive location data will be protected under the provisions of the Government Records Access and Management Act (Utah Code 63-2-101 et seq.).



Signed
Robert G. Valentine, Director
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

12.28.94

Date